

**From:** Peter Lance <pl@peterlance.com>

**Subject:** The Newport PD's protracted re-investigation of "The Duke case"

**Date:** November 9, 2021 at 1:08:08 PM PST

**To:** Angela McCalla, Charles Holder Jr., Kathryn Leonard, Mayor Jeanne-Marie Napolitano, Lynn Underwood Ceglie, Jamie Bova, Elizabeth Fuerte, City Manager Joseph Nicholson

To the Mayor, City Manager and esteemed members of The Newport City Council,

By way of introduction, I'm a Newporter born and bred. This is a link to [my brief bio on amazon](#). I devoted my career largely to investigative journalism, beginning as a cub reporter for The Newport Daily News back in 1967, eight months after Doris Duke killed her art curator, designer and long time companion Eduardo Tirella outside the gates of Rough Point, her Bellevue Avenue estate: a homicide that the Newport PD quickly ruled "[an unfortunate accident](#)," falsely claiming that Mr. Tirella had been "crushed against the iron gates."

In 2018 after ten years writing investigative books on counter-terrorism and organized crime [for HarperCollins](#), I decided to reexamine the case. The result was a piece published in [the July/August 2020 edition of Vanity Fair](#) in which I made the case that Miss Duke murdered Eduardo with intent and that the Newport PD, at the time, corruptly covered it up.

I then wrote a 438 page book, HOMICIDE AT ROUGH POINT based on my findings. It was published [in four editions](#) in late February, resulting in significant media coverage, particularly after I filed [a second VF piece on August 5th, 2021](#) and [The Associated Press](#) sent the story worldwide.

All of that followed the current Newport PD's re-opening of "the Duke case," by Det. Jacque Wuest the Department's cold case detective, on July 2nd. A month later she sent me [the first of multiple emails](#) confirming that the NPD had reopened the case and pledging that it would not be "ignored." Further she asked for my help in "bringing justice for Eduardo and his family."

For more than three months following the commencement of that new probe I was in regular contact with City Manager Joseph Nicholson Jr., whom I have always held in high regard, but I haven't heard from him since I received my last email from Det. Wuest on Sept. 22nd, 2021 attached below. I'm copying him on this email.

Det. Wuest's reopening of the Duke/Tirella probe, which received [national](#) and [international](#) coverage in August, has now entered its 5th month and it's clear that she has been obstructed in pursuing it by Lt. Corey A. Huck, her immediate supervisor, who has twice denied in the media that the case was reopened and [ordered her as early as August 19th not to contact me](#).

## **WHY I'M APPROACHING YOU NOW**

I'm reaching out to the City Council pursuant to Subsection 5-4 (g) of [The City's Code of Ordinance](#), which provides that the City Manager has the duty "To make any study or investigation which in the Manager's opinion may be for the best interest of the City or which may be ordered by the Council."

Yesterday I spoke at length by phone with Mayor Napolitano (who I'm ccing on this). I sent her a detailed email and FedExd her a hardcover first edition of my book, which I'll send to each of you as well. In the meantime, if you haven't read it, this is a link to [A REVIEW COPY](#).

If you scroll through it, you'll see that the principal chapters making the case for murder are: [CHAPTERS, 1-2 and 32-33](#).

The chapters detailing the extraordinary cover-up by Chief Joseph Radice and his subsequent early retirement are [CHAPTERS 6-7 and 10](#). The book is factually bulletproof with sixty (60) pages of end-note annotations. Further, my findings have been heavily vetted by lawyers for Condé Nast, publisher of Vanity Fair and The New Yorker. Since July 16th, 2020 when my first piece ran, through publication of the book and my subsequent VF piece, not a single one of my findings has been questioned or challenged.

Because, there is global media interest in the outcome of the Newport PD's second probe of this matter, as a Newporter I believe that it's clearly in "the best interest of The City" for the Council to insure (as Det. Wuest promised in her first letter to me) that the NPD endeavors to correct "any possible misleading information from the past" and "bring justice for Eduardo." You'll note from my book and the VF pieces that Eduardo Tirella was a war hero and Renaissance man who loyally served Miss Duke for seven years before, moments after he told her he was leaving her employ, she intentionally crushed him to death under the wheels of a two-ton station wagon.

### **THE MURDEROUS QUID PRO QUO**

It's clear that with her restoration work, Doris Duke helped rescue Newport from bankruptcy in the early 1970's after President Nixon cut 21,000 Navy-related jobs in Rhode Island. There's no doubt that The Doris Duke Charitable Foundation does tremendous philanthropic work. But as noted in a recent TOWN AND COUNTRY piece on Newport, "Doris Duke's actions after the famous automobile accident in which she was involved are another reason Newport gained national prominence, especially for its architecture."

Thus, in the aftermath of my investigation, journalists have now begun to draw a straight line between Eduardo's violent death and Doris Duke's generosity to The City By The Sea. As such, I would humbly submit that in this age of transparency, setting the historical record straight on Miss Duke's murderous quid pro quo, should be a priority for the City Council.

I'm attaching my last email to Det. Wuest on Sept. 22nd, in which **(highlighted in red)** I provided her with all of the evidence she needed to change the corrupt "unfortunate accident" conclusion reached by the Newport PD in 1966 to a finding that Eduardo Tirella was killed as the result of a series of intentional acts committed by Doris Duke.

To underscore just how badly the Newport PD has mismanaged the current investigation, I'm attaching a Word file of the 30 page [TIMELINE](#) I prepared for City Manager Nicholson and sent to him on Thursday. Containing dozens of hyperlinks, the [TIMELINE](#) tracks the chronology of Det. Wuest's probe from July 2nd when she first interviewed Robert E. "Bob" Walker Jr, the only living witness to Eduardo's murder, who prompted her to reopen the case. Depending on the formatting of your system I'm also attaching it as a pdf.

Please take the time to watch [the VIDEO of my interview with Bob](#) edited by VF and examine the [TIMELINE](#) to see if you don't believe that Det. Wuest's "investigation" doesn't deserve more expeditious handling after what is now the 130th day with no end in sight.

Please feel free to contact me by email or text at the number below. I live and work in California but I'm also available by phone seven days a week from 12:30 PM EST/9:30 AM PST.

Many Thanks,

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